

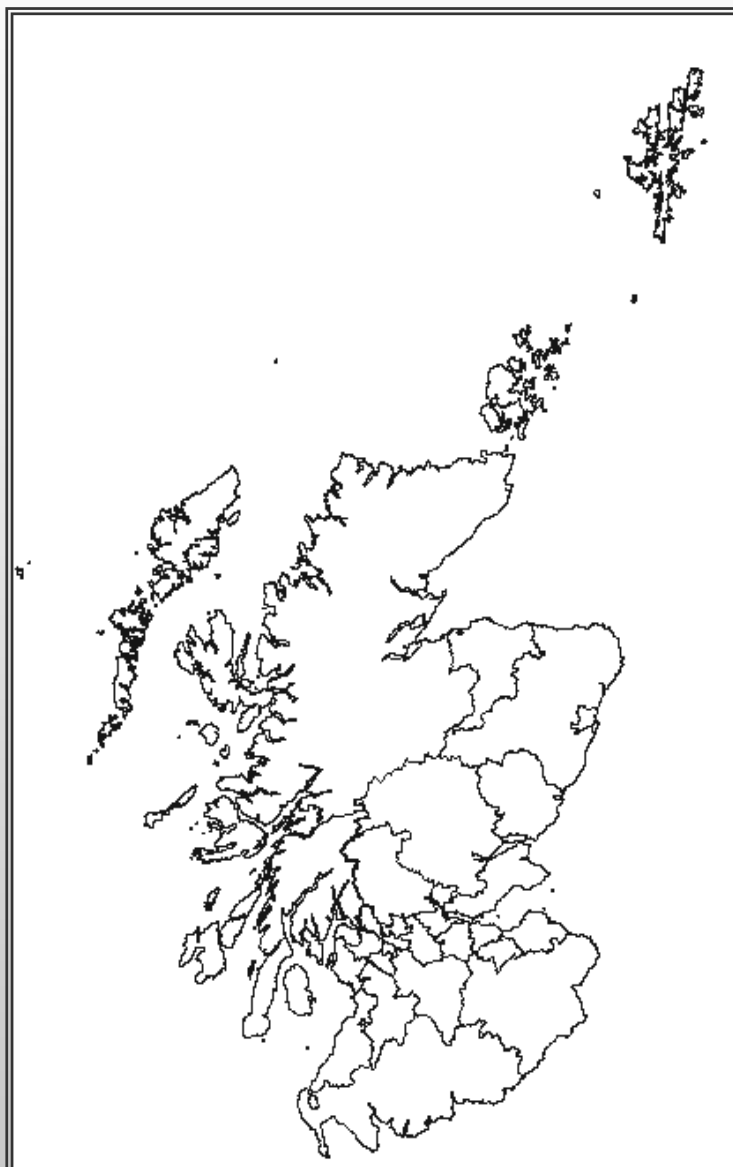


Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland

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Annual Report 2013-14



www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk

established by Parliament to advise Ministers on local government boundaries

Chair's foreword

This has been a year of change for the Commission. In 2013, Peter Mackay's tenure as Chair and the appointments of Commissioners Brian Clark and Paula Sharp came to an end after 6 years of excellent service. The Deputy Chair Mr William Magee continues in his role, having been reappointed by Scottish Ministers for a 4-year term ending in 2016. The Secretary to the Commission, Dr Hugh Buchanan, is to take up another post in the civil service after 7 years' service and a recruitment process to appoint his successor is underway. I will take this opportunity to thank them for their valued contribution to the work of the Commission.

I assumed the role of Chair of the Commission on 1 September 2013, in time to welcome 3 new Commissioners: Professor Ailsa Henderson, Mr Roland Bean and Dr Susan Walker. We immediately set to work on the task at hand: developing Initial Proposals on councillor numbers for the Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in Scotland.

It has been 2 decades since the national methodology for determining councillor numbers was devised. Upon review, and noting the responses to the Commission's consultation on councillor numbers in 2011, we proposed to include deprivation in the methodology for the first time, reduce the number of categories of councils from 7 to 5, and increase the maximum number of councillors in a council area from 80 to 85. Given the potential magnitude of the resulting changes to numbers in individual council areas, we proposed to limit change in councillor numbers in any one council to 10% of the existing number.

Having met with the Minister for Local Government and Planning in November 2013, we were mindful that he would find it difficult to justify an overall increase in councillor numbers in Scotland, and so we proposed ratios of electors per councillor for each category that we believe appropriately reflects the impact of population size, population distribution and deprivation on council areas in each category whilst avoiding significant change in overall councillor numbers.

We consulted with councils on our Initial Proposals for a statutory 2-month period ending in April 2014 and met with representatives of all councils to introduce the review and answer any questions that arose. At the time of writing, we are making preparations for an anticipated public consultation on our Initial Proposals, between 29 May and 21 August 2014.

In the coming year, we will develop proposals for ward boundaries and consult with councils on these. We also look forward to hosting the annual meeting of the UK boundary commissions in November 2014. Finally, we are making preparations to commission research into the role of councillors in Scotland and hope to publish the results of that research in 2015.

Ronnie Hinds
Chair, Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland
May 2014



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This report covers the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. Copies are available from our website (www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk), or by request from our Secretariat.

1 The Commission

1.1 Background

The Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland was established by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Our duties and powers are detailed in the 1973 Act. We are responsible for:

- reviews of local authority areas in Scotland; and
- reviews of electoral arrangements for local authorities.

We are an advisory Non-departmental Public Body (NDPB) sponsored and wholly funded by the Scottish Government: responsibility for the Commission within Scottish Government lies with the Local Government Division. We are an independent and non-political body.

1.2 Membership

The 1973 Act specifies that our membership comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair and up to four further Commissioners.

Members are appointed on a term basis and posts are filled through open competition using the procedures laid down by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments in Scotland. Appointments are made by Scottish Ministers.

1.2.1 Chair

The Chair is Ronnie Hinds who was appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 September 2013. He succeeded Peter Mackay, CB who served as our Chair since 1 November 2007.

1.2.2 Deputy Chair

The Deputy Chair is William Magee, OBE who was re-appointed for a second 4 year term ending on 31 August 2016, having originally been appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 September 2008.

1.2.3 Commissioners

The Commission can include up to 4 Commissioners in addition to the Chair and Deputy Chair. The 3 current Commissioners were all appointed during the year and are:

- Ailsa Henderson, appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 September 2013;
- Roland Bean, appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 November 2013; and
- Sue Walker, appointed for a 4 year term starting on 1 November 2013.

During the year, the terms of office of Professor Brian Clark and Mrs Paula Sharp came to an end, with both having served as members of the Commission since 1 November 2007.

1.3 Meetings

Our workload this year has been light until embarking on our Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements in October 2013. We met on 6 occasions in 2013-14. Minutes of meetings are placed on our website.

Mr Hinds and Mr Bean attended the annual meeting of the UK Boundary Commissions in Cardiff on 21 November 2013. The meeting provided an excellent forum for the Commissions to learn from each other's experience and compare notes on common issues.

1.4 Code of Conduct

We have a Code of Conduct issued in 2006 by Scottish Ministers under Part 4 of the Ethical Standards in Public Life etc (Scotland) Act 2000. In May 2008, we agreed and published a Supplementary Code on Roles and Responsibilities which expands on certain areas in the Code of Conduct in the light of our role, and provides guidance to Commissioners.

Scottish Ministers have revised the model code of conduct under Part 1 of the 2000 Act, and are in the process of reviewing the Part 4 Code of Conduct for public bodies. We will assess the need to revise our Supplementary Code if a revised Code of Conduct is issued.

The Code of Conduct and the Supplementary Code on Roles and Responsibilities are available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

1.5 Register of Commissioners' Interests

We maintain a Register of Interests of Commissioners, in accordance with the Commissioners' Code of Conduct. The Register of Interests is reviewed annually and is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

2 Secretariat

We are supported by a small Secretariat. Schedule 4 to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 provides that Scottish Ministers may appoint a Secretary to the Commission, after consultation with us. The Secretary, who is the Secretariat's senior officer, is normally a civil servant assigned from the Scottish Government.

The work of the Secretariat includes:

- facilitating boundary reviews;
- dealing with the everyday administrative matters relating to our business such as finance, purchasing and accommodation;
- liaising with other UK Commissions and government departments with an interest in boundary matters; and
- responding to correspondence concerning boundary issues.

The Secretary is currently Dr Hugh Buchanan who has been in post since October 2007. Dr Buchanan is to take up another post in the civil service and the process to recruit his successor has begun.

The Secretariat is accommodated in Thistle House, near Haymarket, Edinburgh. Thistle House is a Scottish Government building, but the Secretariat continues to ensure that our political independence remains clear.

Staff of the Secretariat are assigned from the Scottish Government. The number of staff assigned is dependent on the volume of review activity and the need to develop, maintain and update information systems and respond to enquiries etc.

During the year 2013-14, the assignment of Secretariat staff to support this Commission was as follows:

Post	Full-time equivalent
Secretary	0.50
Casework Managers	1.24
Casework Officers	1.00
IT Manager	0.50
General Office Manager	0.50
Total	3.74

Staff members are employed on a full-time basis, with their time allocated between support for us and for the Boundary Commission for Scotland which is responsible for reviewing constituency boundaries for the United Kingdom Parliament and constituencies and regions for the Scottish Parliament. The Secretariat is funded separately by the Scotland Office for that work.

3 Governance

3.1 Legislation

Our local government work is governed by the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, specifically in sections 12 to 28 and Schedules 4 to 6. There were no amendments to that legislation during the year.

The text of the legislation is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

After evaluation of a pilot scheme, Scottish Ministers discontinued the legislation for direct elections to Health Boards in Scotland through The Health Boards (Membership and Elections) (Scotland) Order 2013 (SSI 2013/364) which came into force on 31 December 2013. The discontinued legislation included the part of the Health Boards (Membership and Elections) (Scotland) Act 2009 which gave us a role to advise in cases where multiple wards were to be used for Health Board elections. Since each of the elections in the pilot scheme had used a whole Health Board area as a single electoral ward, we had never exercised that role.

3.2 Direction from Ministers

Section 14(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 requires us to carry out a review of all administrative area boundaries every 8 to 12 years after 1996. Scottish Ministers have issued a Direction to us instructing us not to carry out any such reviews in the period to 31 March 2017.

The Direction does not prevent us from carrying out ad-hoc reviews under section 14(2) of the 1973 Act. When we have done so in the past this has been in cases where new development has taken place across council area boundaries.

3.3 National Performance Framework

Scottish Government intends that public bodies should align the outcomes of their activity with the Government's National Performance Framework and the associated National Outcomes, last updated in December 2011. We have concluded that our work should contribute to the following National Outcomes:

- *We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.*
- *We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*
- *We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.*
- *Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.*

The first and second of these reflect the desired result from successful definition of local government boundaries where access to services is supported, and communities feel that boundaries support and reflect their communities of interest.

The third reflects the environmental desirability of effective use of resources.

The fourth reflects the way in which well-designed administrative boundaries support the effective delivery of local government services. In addition, it reflects our aspiration to conduct our work efficiently and effectively, and in a way which involves the public.

Further information on the National Performance Framework is available at <http://www.scotlandperforms.com>.

3.4 Management Statement and Financial Memorandum

We have a Management Statement and Financial Memorandum with the Scottish Government. The Management Statement sets out the broad framework within which we operate, while the Financial Memorandum sets out certain aspects of the financial framework in greater detail. The Management Statement and Financial Memorandum is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

3.5 Data protection

We handle personal information in conformance with the Data Protection Acts, and we have notified the Information Commissioner's Office of the personal data which we handle.

3.6 Equality issues

We have an Equality Statement setting out our approach to equality and diversity issues. The Statement is available on our website, or a copy can be provided on request.

3.7 Reporting requirements

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 specifies certain reporting requirements for Scottish public bodies. For ease of reference, we have placed all of the information required in Appendix A.

3.8 Risk Management

The Secretariat has developed a Risk Management policy covering our work and that of the parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland, which is available on our website.

4 Enquiries and public information

We use our website to inform the public about our work. In addition, the Secretariat responds to requests for information made by email, letter or phone.

We have adopted the Scottish Information Commissioner's Model Freedom of Information Publication Scheme, and published our resulting Guide to Information: these are available from the Publications section of our website.

4.1 Enquiries

During 2013-14, the Secretariat recorded 42 enquiries relating to us and our work. Of these, 5 stated that they were being made under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002. No requests for review or appeals to the Scottish Information Commissioner were made regarding our handling of information requests. Enquiries are reviewed to assess whether they indicate possible improvements or additions to our website.

4.2 Website

Our website remains the primary means for us to make information available. We update the website with all the material which we publish.

4.3 Maps of constituencies

During the year, in conjunction with the parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland, we launched an interactive Map Browser. The Map Browser allows you to view maps showing the current and past electoral boundaries that we have been responsible for since our establishment in 1973 on a background of current Ordnance Survey mapping.

The Map Browser includes 3 sets of wards for Scotland's current councils, 2 sets of wards for the superseded Region and District councils, and boundaries for the various interim reviews that we have conducted. The Map Browser also shows data from the parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland since its establishment in 1944.

We have also made downloadable data of past wards available on the website. These are in shape file format which is widely used for geographic data.

4.4 Information Papers

During the year, we made minor revisions to keep up to date our series of Information Papers and Quick Guides explaining our work.

The full set of Quick Guides and Information Papers is available on our website.

4.5 Minutes and meeting papers

We publish the minutes of our meetings in draft form on our website, after approval by the Chair. On occasion, we may decide that, for reasons of confidentiality or other sensitivities, full disclosure of our discussions should not be made at the draft stage. Once we have considered and finalised the minutes at our following meeting, the finalised minutes are placed on the website in place of the draft.

Our meeting papers since 2007 are on our website. Normally, we publish meeting papers once we have concluded our discussions on a particular topic, and have agreed and published the minutes for the relevant meeting. Where the meeting

papers include a draft of a document which is later published in its own right (such as our Information Papers, Annual Reports and Corporate Plans), we do not normally publish the draft.

5 Review activity

5.1 Administrative area reviews

We have not conducted any administrative area reviews during 2013-14. Since 2008, we have completed 3 reviews of administrative areas in cases where development had taken place across administrative area boundaries resulting in buildings straddling the boundary. In each case, the administrative area boundary has been amended by Scottish Ministers so that it no longer divides any buildings.

5.2 Electoral reviews

We expect to complete our Fifth General Reviews of Electoral Arrangements for all council areas in time for the local government elections scheduled for 2017.

We met with Derek Mackay, Minister for Local Government and Planning in November 2013, and with COSLA and SOLACE in January 2014, to explain our plans for the reviews.

In the period up to April 2014, we developed our Initial Proposals for councillor numbers using a nationally consistent methodology and consulted with councils on these proposals. During that consultation, we visited all councils to introduce the reviews and answer any questions that arose. We now intend to hold a 12-week public consultation on our Initial Proposals between 29 May and 21 August 2014.

Thereafter, we will begin a detailed review of the wards in each council area in the light of the different factors listed in the governing legislation. These are electoral parity (i.e. having "as nearly as may be" the same number of electors per councillor for each ward within a council area); fixing easily identifiable boundaries; local ties; and special geographical considerations. We will consult each council, and other interests including the political parties, on our provisional conclusions in the hope of making firm proposals to Ministers by May 2016. Thereafter it would be for Ministers to approve or amend the proposals in time for them to be brought into effect at the 2017 local government election.

6 Other activities

6.1 Staffing and training

During the year, the Secretariat has promoted and recruited permanent staff to fill posts which became vacant. Training has continued to meet staff and review requirements.

6.2 Liaison with others

6.2.1 Scottish Government

We continue to have regular contact and dialogue with our sponsor department within the Scottish Government. The Secretariat has also participated regularly in a liaison group of Scottish Government geographical information system (GIS) users.

6.2.2 Ordnance Survey

The Secretariat continues to work with Ordnance Survey to ensure that we have access to the optimum set of mapping data products to support our work, and that we receive technical advice on the deployment of those products. The Secretariat and Ordnance Survey continue to work together to ensure the smooth flow of accurate information about our decisions, so that they can be included in Ordnance Survey's products. The licensing of Ordnance Survey data to Scottish public bodies is covered by an agreement known as the One Scotland Mapping Agreement, and the Secretariat has participated actively in the management and implementation of that agreement.

6.2.3 National Records of Scotland

The Secretariat liaises regularly with staff of the National Records of Scotland (formerly the General Register Office for Scotland) on shared interests concerning geographic information and electoral statistics.

6.2.4 National Library of Scotland

The Secretariat has worked closely with the National Library of Scotland to compile datasets relating to past local government and electoral boundaries in Scotland.

6.2.5 Office for National Statistics

The Secretariat continues to liaise with the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

6.2.6 Other organisations

The Secretariat has maintained its contacts with the Association of Electoral Administrators; the Scottish Assessors' Association Electoral Registration Committee; the Society of Local Authority Lawyers and Administrators in Scotland (SOLAR); the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE); the Electoral Commission and other UK Boundary Commissions. This has been through attendance at meetings of the Scottish and Northern Ireland Branch of the Association of Electoral Administrators, the Electoral Commission's Political Parties Panel in Scotland, liaison meetings with other UK Boundary Commissions and email correspondence.

7 Expenditure

Our expenditure for the year 2013-14 is set out under broad headings in the table below. After setting the initial budget, the Secretariat re-forecasts expenditure during the year, and keeps the sponsor department informed of the likely expenditure for the year.

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 requires public bodies to report on specified elements of financial expenditure. That information is at Appendix A.

Financial Performance April 2013 – March 2014		
	Expenditure	
	Budget (£)	Actual (£)
Staff Salaries	140,471	108,907
Commissioners' Fees	20,000	15,976
Accommodation	11,000	8,924
Administration	15,525	15,822
Mapping	41,400	0
Travel and Subsistence	2,590	1,898
Review costs	120,000	68,828
Total	350,986	220,353

7.1 Staff salaries

Salary costs are determined by the pay arrangements for our staff, who are employees of the Scottish Government.

7.2 Commissioners' fees

Commissioners' fees are determined by the Scottish Government and cover attendance at our scheduled meetings and associated preparation, meetings held with other UK Boundary Commissions and ad hoc meetings held with other bodies. Commissioners' fees are paid on a daily basis for each meeting. The fee rates during the year 2013-14 are:

Chair	£347 per day
Deputy Chair	£252 per day
Commissioner	£219 per day

The Chair's fee has remained unchanged since August 2007 and the fees for the Deputy Chair and a Commissioner increased by £2 per day in 2013-14.

7.3 Accommodation

We share accommodation with the Boundary Commission for Scotland, which is responsible for advising the Secretary of State for Scotland on matters relating to parliamentary constituency boundaries. The figures shown in the above table in respect of accommodation reflect our share of those costs.

7.4 Administration

Administration costs include office equipment and furniture, stationery and other consumables, telephone, facsimile and email, publications and advertising, staff and Commissioner training, computer software maintenance, support and licence fees.

7.5 Mapping

Mapping costs cover data licences and consumables. The chief item budgeted for under this heading is the Secretariat's contribution to a collective licence between Scottish public bodies and Ordnance Survey for the use of its spatial data products. However, during the year the allocation of costs for this data has changed and we longer expect to include this in our budget.

7.6 Travel and subsistence

Travel and subsistence includes rail, air and car-hire costs incurred by the Secretariat and Commissioners in the course of official business, such as site visits required in conjunction with review activities. Travel and subsistence costs are paid at the same rate that applies to staff of the Scottish Government.

7.7 Review costs

Review costs cover those items directly attributable to the conduct of our boundary reviews, and include newspaper advertising and printing. We included provision for reviews in our budget in case we needed to conduct any interim reviews, but this has not been necessary.

8 Work programme for 2014-15

Our planned activities for 2014-15 are set out in our Corporate Plan for the period 2014-17, which is available on our website, and are summarised here.

Administrative area reviews

We will conduct minor reviews of administrative areas as required. At the time of writing, we are aware of one case where such a review will be required: the boundary between Fife council area and Perth and Kinross council area near Kelty. Since we are currently conducting general electoral reviews an extended review timetable will operate for this review.

Local government electoral reviews

We started our Fifth Reviews of local government electoral arrangements on 21 February 2014 when we initiated our consultation with councils on our proposals for councillor numbers. The reviews cover all 32 local authorities in Scotland, and we expect that they will be completed by May 2016 in order to make recommendations to Scottish Ministers in time for the local government elections scheduled to take place in May 2017.

During 2014-15 we expect to progress the following stages of the reviews:

- public consultation on councillor numbers;
- provisional decisions on councillor numbers;
- development of initial proposals on ward boundaries; and
- consultation with councils on ward boundaries.

Other activity

In conjunction with the Boundary Commission for Scotland, we will host this year's meeting of the UK boundary commissions. We also intend to commission research into the role and workload of councillors in Scotland: we hope that this research will provide evidence to support our considerations in future reviews. We will carry out our governance functions throughout the year to ensure that we manage the Commission's operations efficiently and cost effectively, and meet the requirements of our Management Statement and Financial Memorandum from the Scottish Government.

9 Further information

If you have a query which cannot be answered by this report or our website (www.lgbc-scotland.gov.uk) please do not hesitate to contact us either by e-mail, telephone or in writing. Please see the front page of this report for our contact details.

Appendix A - specified reporting

Part 3 of the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010 requires public bodies to publish specified items of information at the end of each financial year. This Appendix provides that information.

Expenditure on named items

The Act requires us to report expenditure on the following items:

Expenditure item	Outcome
Public relations	nil
Overseas travel	nil
Hospitality and entertainment	£261
External consultancy	nil

Public relations

In the course of our reviews we advertise our proposals through public notices in newspapers. We do not consider that this constitutes public relations expenditure.

Overseas travel

We have made no expenditure on overseas travel during the year.

Hospitality and entertainment

The figure recorded is for working lunches and light refreshments at meetings of the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland and the Secretariat during the year totalling £261.

External consultancy

We have made no expenditure on external consultancy during the year.

Expenditure in excess of £25,000

The Act requires us to publish details of any payment made during the year in excess of £25,000.

We made payments to Informed Solutions Ltd of £25,392 in February 2014 and £31,740 in March 2014 for the construction of a consultation portal for use in the Fifth Reviews of Electoral Arrangements.

Remuneration above £150,000

The Act requires us to publish details of any Commissioners or staff remunerated above £150,000 during the year: there were no such individuals.

Sustainable growth

The Act requires us to publish a statement on the steps taken to promote and increase sustainable growth through the exercise of our functions.

We align our work with the Scottish Government's purpose of delivering sustainable growth through identification of the relevant parts of the National Performance Framework to which our work contributes, as reported in section 3.3.

Efficiency, economy and effectiveness

The Act requires us to publish a statement on the steps taken to improve efficiency, economy and effectiveness in the exercise of our functions.

Scottish Government encourages improvement of efficiency, economy and effectiveness through shared services. We participate in shared services through:

- occupation of Scottish Government owned and managed office accommodation;
- a shared Secretariat with the parliamentary Boundary Commission for Scotland;
- use of Scottish Government contracts for purchase of supplies and services, including stationery, computers, newspaper advertising, and temporary staffing.

Use of collaborative contracts realised cash savings of £7,276 across the Secretariat during 2013-14. Of this, £3,611 was attributable to expenditure relating to the Local Government Boundary Commission for Scotland, as shown in the table below.

	Total (£)	LGBCS (£)	BCS (£)
Applications and Web Development	6,986	3,361	3,625
Design and Print	290	250	40
Advertising	0	0	0
Total	7,276	3,611	3,665

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